

斐德希克·德波米

Frédéric Debomy

柳廣成

Lau Kwong-Shing

緬甸
取後
搏



Myanmar,

the last stand

中譯 許惇純

英譯 Alice Heathwood



~~SAVE~~

NO MORE
MURDER

G D M

G D M

G R M

PLEASE!!

FREEDOM



We Want
mo cracy



Focus

Myanmar

A former British colony, Myanmar, also known as Burma, gained independence in 1948. The brief period of democracy which ensued was cut short in 1962 when Burmese army General Ne Win staged a coup, establishing military rule that has since dominated the country. For decades, the Burmese army has faced resistance from armed groups issuing from the country's various minorities, which represent approximately one third of its population.

Aung San Suu Kyi

Born in 1945, she co-founded the National League for Democracy (NLD) in 1988. While her party won the general election in 1990, the army refused to recognise the results and she was condemned to spend the bulk of the next two decades under military house arrest.

Min Aung Hlaing

General Min Aung Hlaing became Commander-in-chief of the Burmese army in 2011, following in the footsteps of military rulers like Ne Win (1962-1988) and Than Shwe (1992-2011). Min Aung Hlaing was the chief instigator behind the February 1, 2021 coup that ended the semi-democratic period of the preceding years.

The 1988 uprising

In 1987, dictator Ne Win demonetised certain bank notes (25, 35 and 75 kyat bills), plunging struggling households into further financial distress. The anti-government protests sparked by demonetisation gathered impetus following the death of a student killed by riot police. On August 8, 1988, hundreds of thousands of people protested across the country. Between March and September of that year, at least 3000 protesters were reported to have been killed.

The Saffron Revolution

On August 15, 2007 the junta abruptly raised fuel prices, sparking protests led first by activists, then later by monks. The movement attracted international media attention before it was quashed by the military in early October.

The November 7, 2010 general election

The NLD's refusal to take part in the electoral masquerade delegitimised the army's claims of democratisation and forced the military to relax its political stranglehold in order to maintain a veneer of credibility. After landside victories at both the 2012 by-election and the 2015 general election, the NLD went on to form government in 2016.

The November 8, 2020 general election

the NLD won this election by a landslide (taking 920 out of 1117 seats in local and national parliaments), while the military backed party won only 71 seats. The result spurred Min Aung Hlaing and his accomplices to execute a coup d'etat on February 1, 2021, and imprison Aung San Suu Kyi.

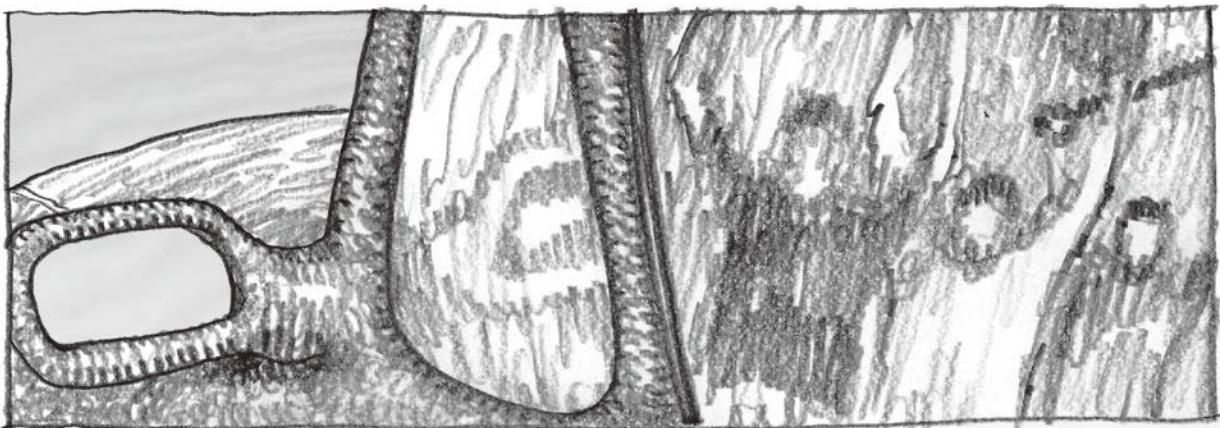
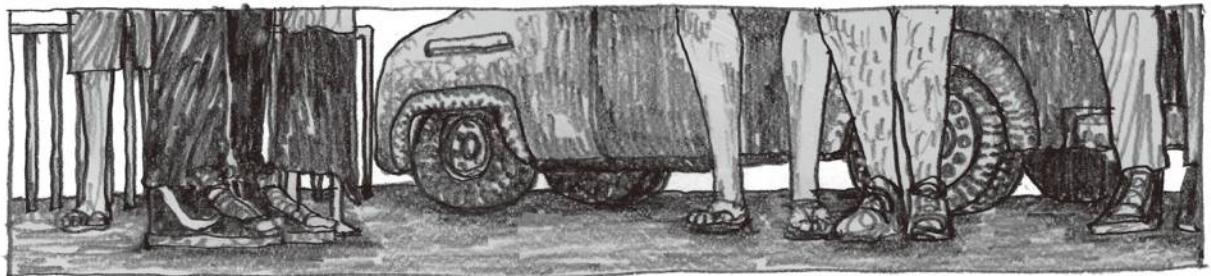
Both the English and Mandarin in this book are translated from the original text in French.

細面角

~~日取後~~

捕

"Min Aung Hlaing, I hate you more than my periods!"



February 2021

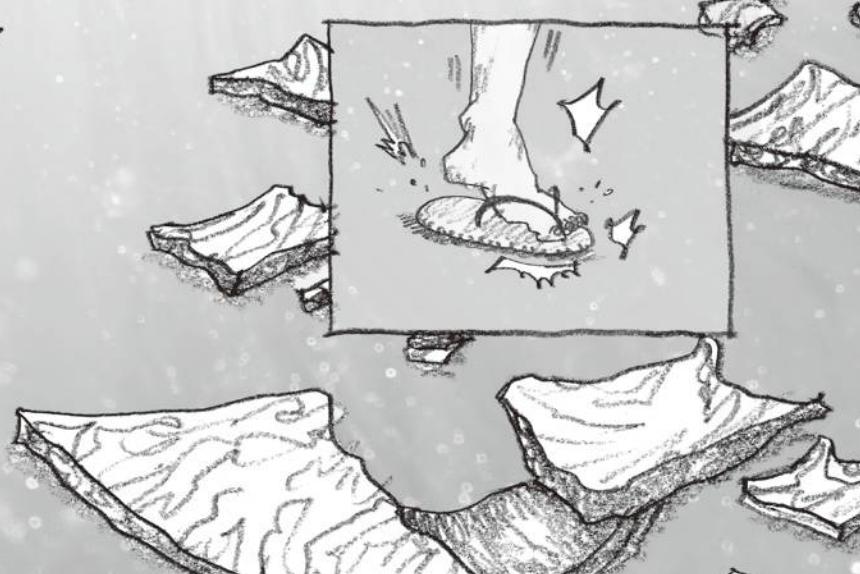


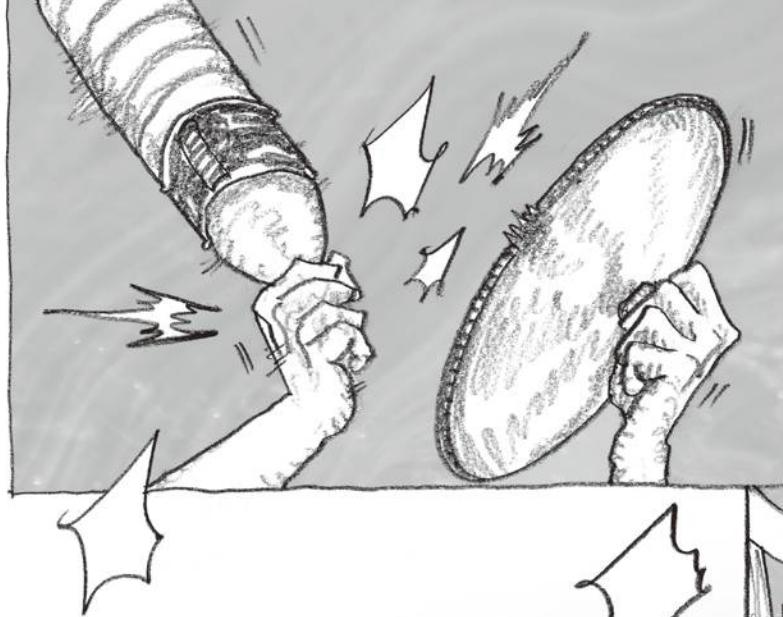


The Burmese army ceased sharing power with democratic authorities, citing irregularities at the November 2020 elections. This ended a period of semi-democracy that had lasted just a few short years. Full military dictatorship was back.



The next day, people began
banging on pots and pans and
railings.



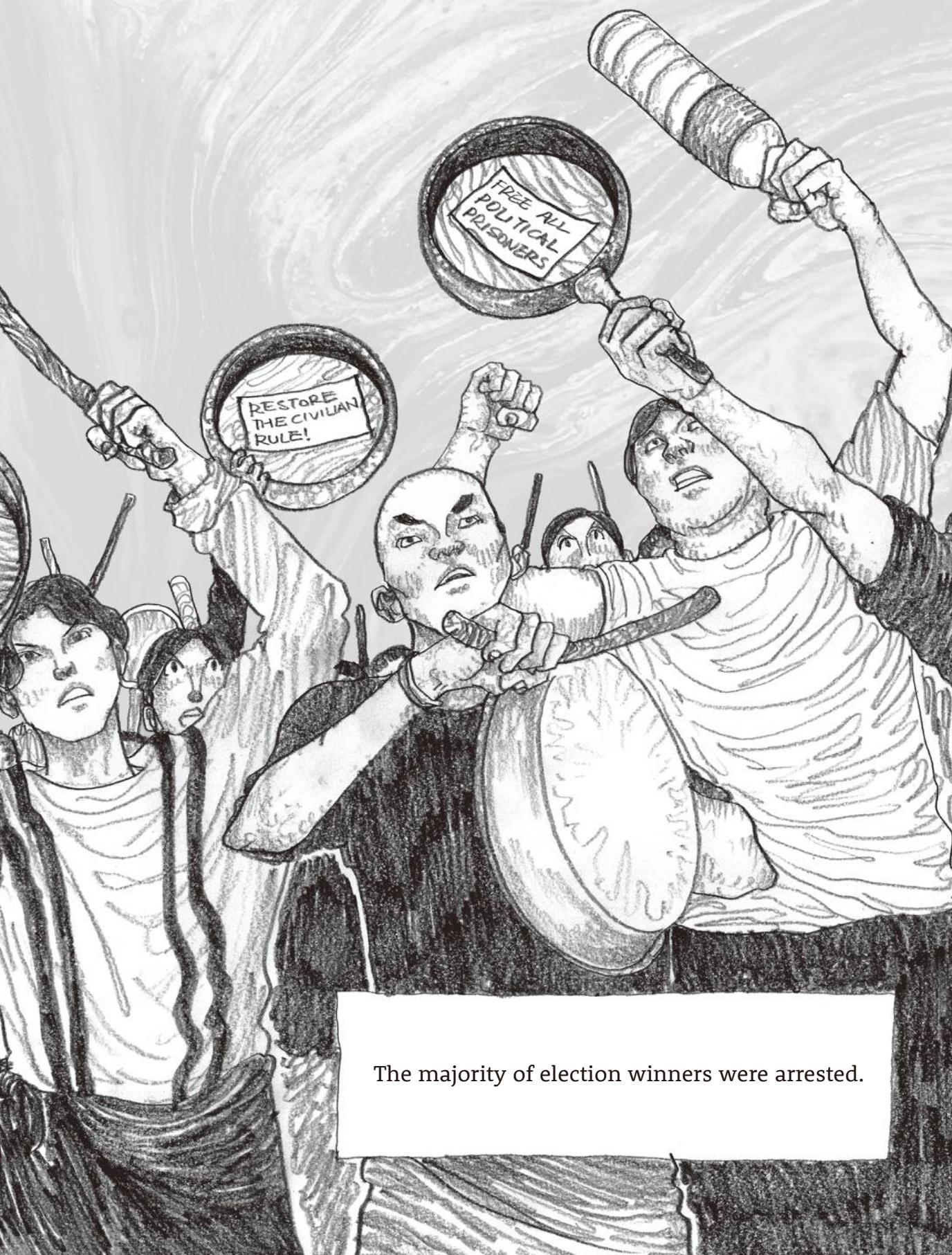


A traditional method of warding off
evil spirits.





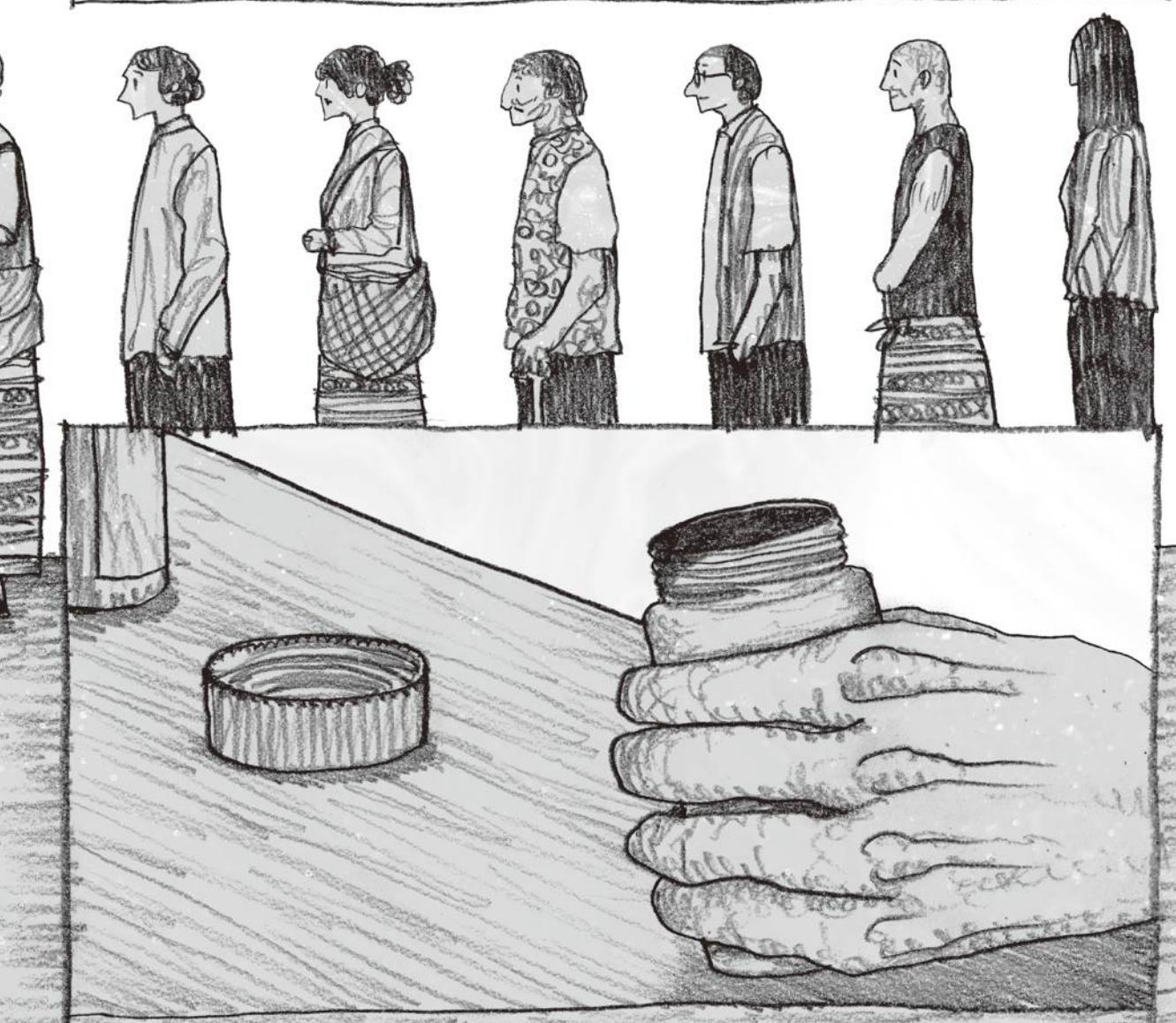
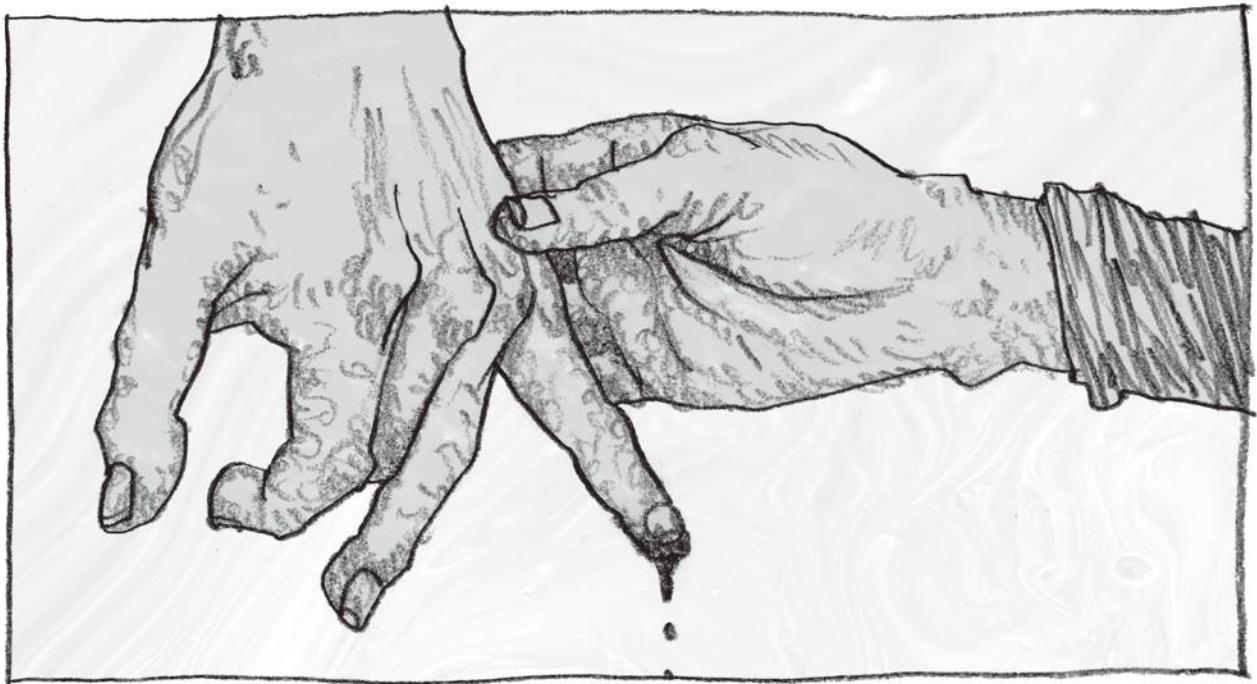
FREE
ALL
POLITICAL
PRISONERS



The majority of election winners were arrested.

In November 2020, many young voters photographed themselves leaving polling stations, one finger stained with ink: a sign that they had voted.





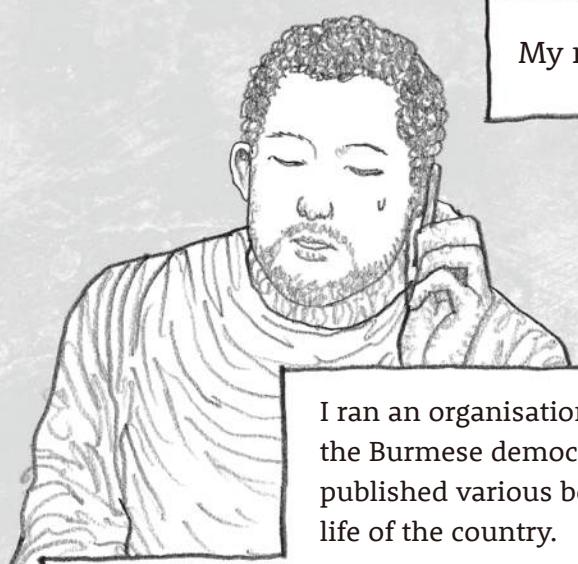


They were proud. Their votes had just been stolen.

Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested on February 1st. She's out of the game.

She could get up to three years in prison for illegal possession of walkie-talkies.

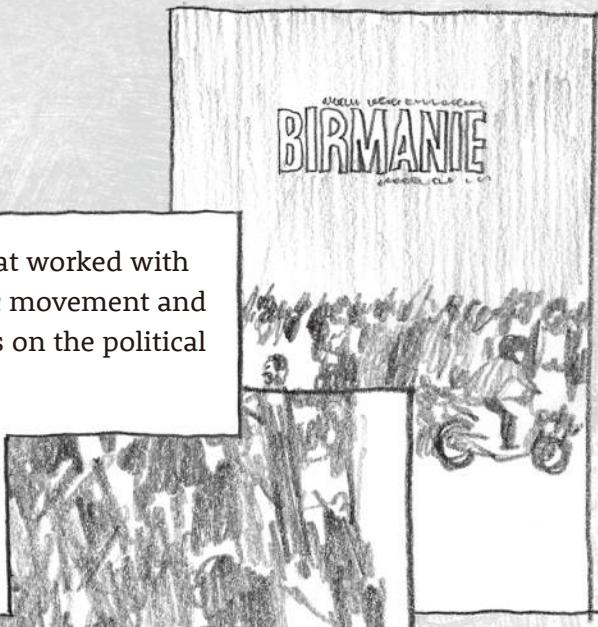
Yes, it's absurd, but that's what they came up with.



My name is Frédéric Debomy.

I ran an organisation that worked with the Burmese democratic movement and published various books on the political life of the country.

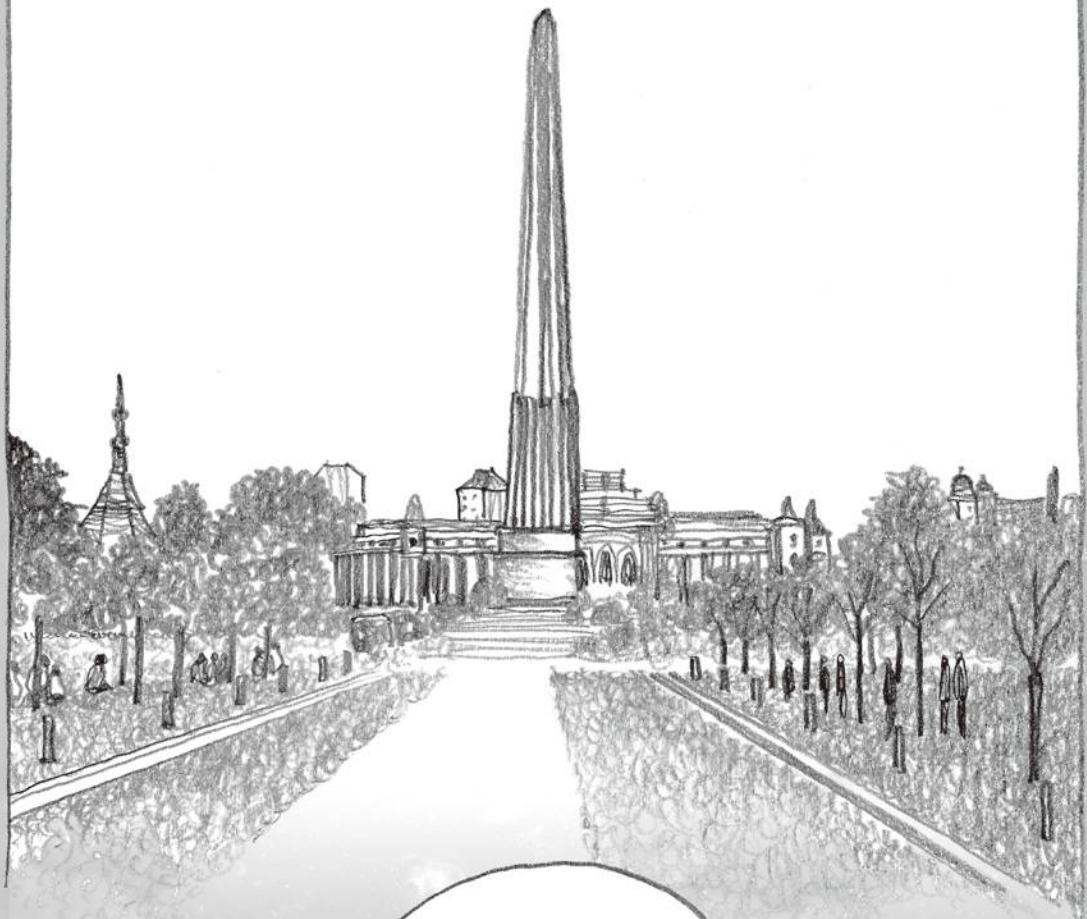
Since the military coup on February 1st, 2021, I've been fielding questions from reporters from France, Belgium and Switzerland.



In those countries, my name is one of the few associated with Myanmar.



I'm deeply sorry that this period of semi-democracy has come to an end for the Burmese people.



“I liked seeing people walk freely through the park.”

Before there
was nothing:

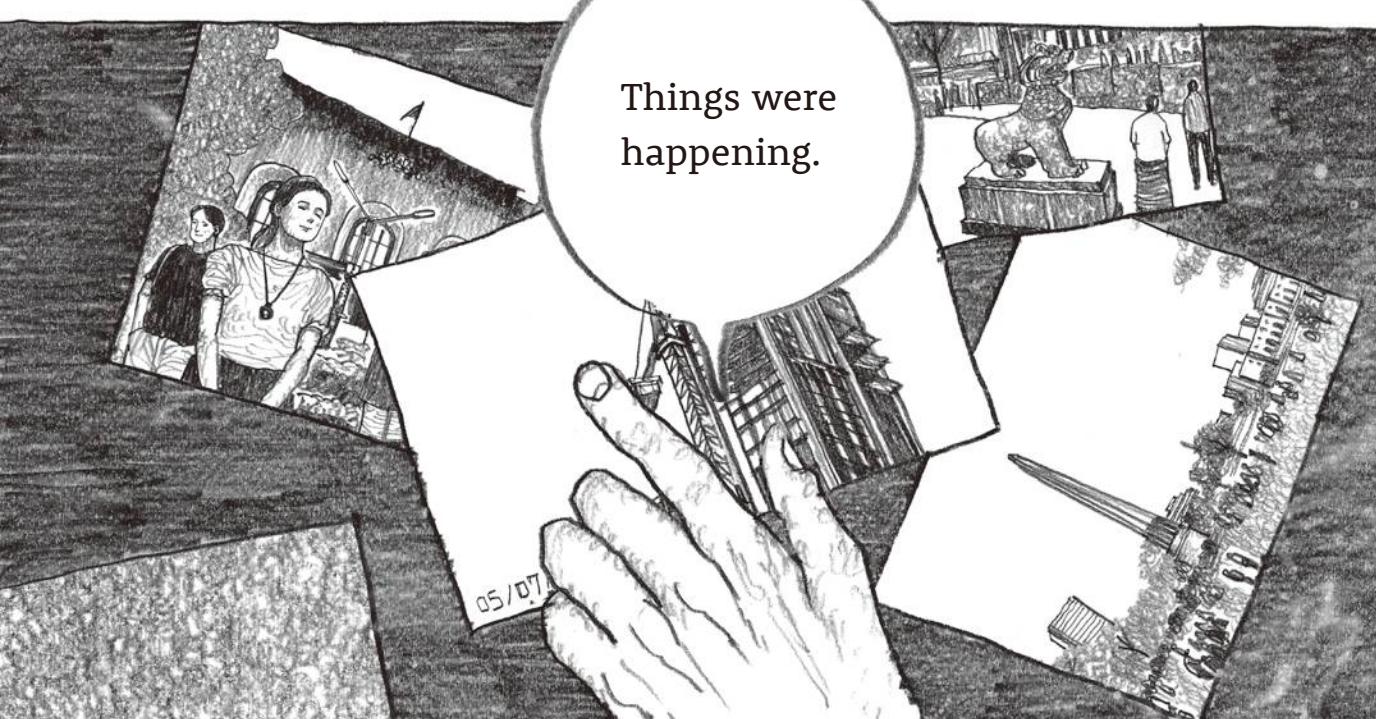
no exhibitions, no
community stands,
no concerts...

Then all of a sudden
there was more
going on, more life.

04/05/2020



Buildings popped up everywhere.
Shopping centres,
big apartment complexes...



Things were happening.

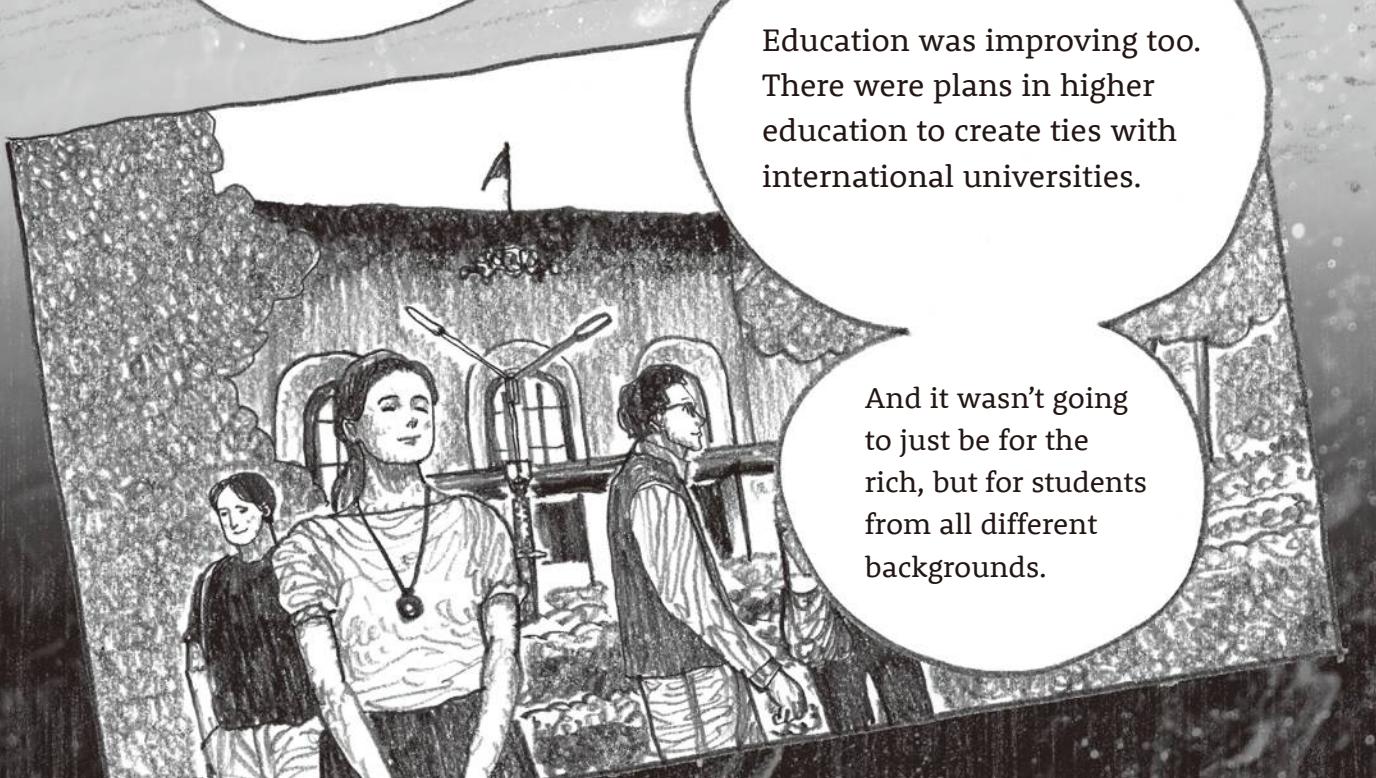


There were still major problems. In Rakhine State in the west, the army was massacring Rohingya muslims,

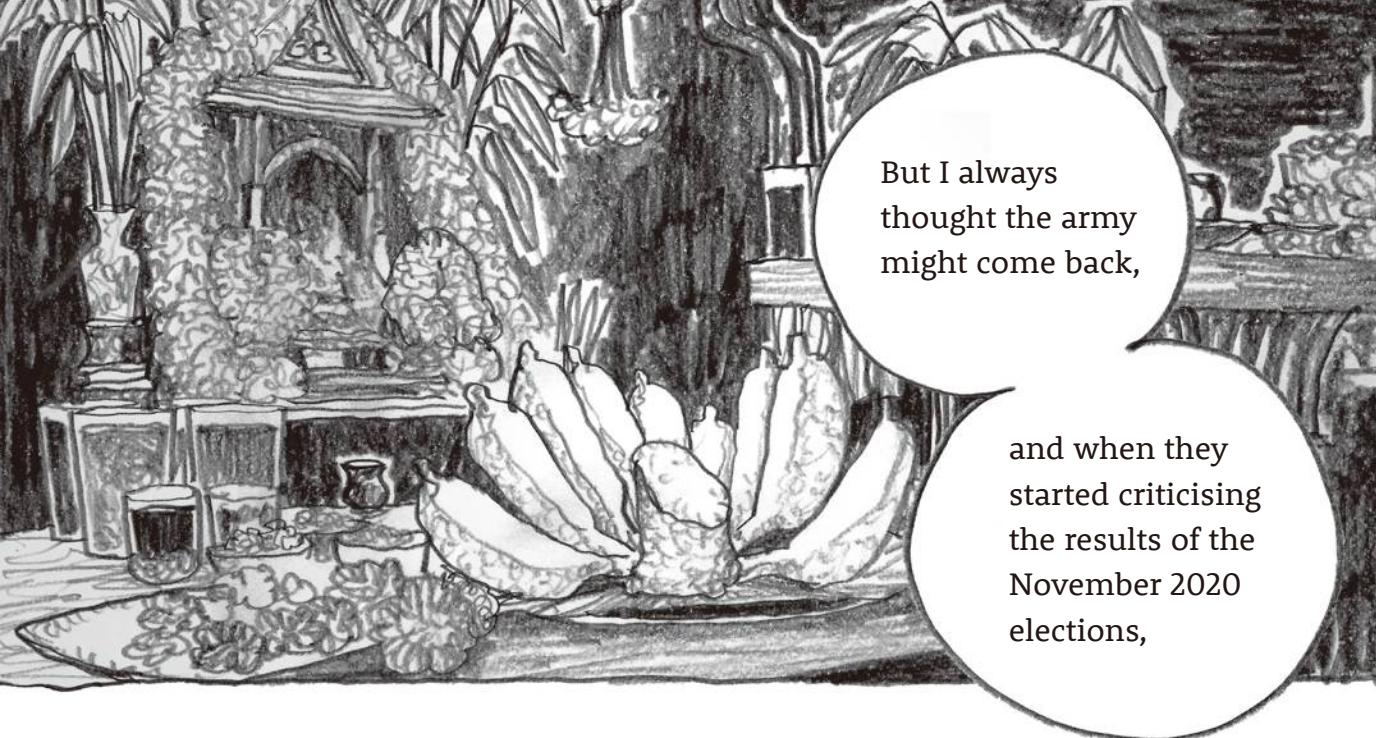
but for many of us, it was the first time we'd experienced such freedom.

We had more access to the rest of the world, communication was no longer blocked. When the army allowed the National League for Democracy to form government in 2016, we gained a kind of freedom of expression we had never known.

Education was improving too. There were plans in higher education to create ties with international universities.



And it wasn't going to just be for the rich, but for students from all different backgrounds.



But I always
thought the army
might come back,



after the National
League for Democracy
won, talking of fraud
that never happened, I
was worried.



I believe once
people get a taste
for power, they
always want more.



That morning, my colleague called me around 6am, to tell me there had been a coup. I didn't want to believe it.

But despite my shock,
I knew it was true.

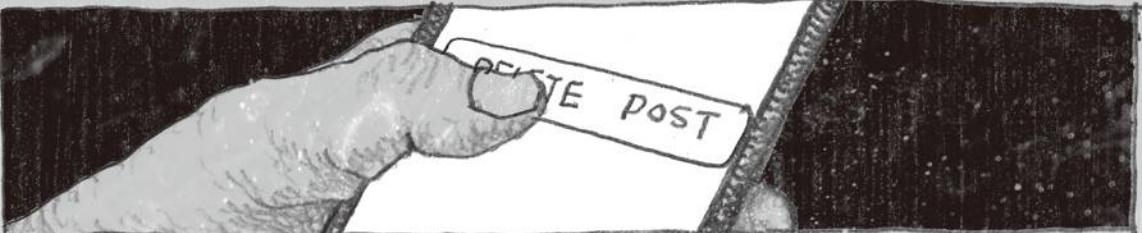


Immediately,

I deleted all “sensitive” posts from my various social media accounts,



because my first thought was the for safety of my family.

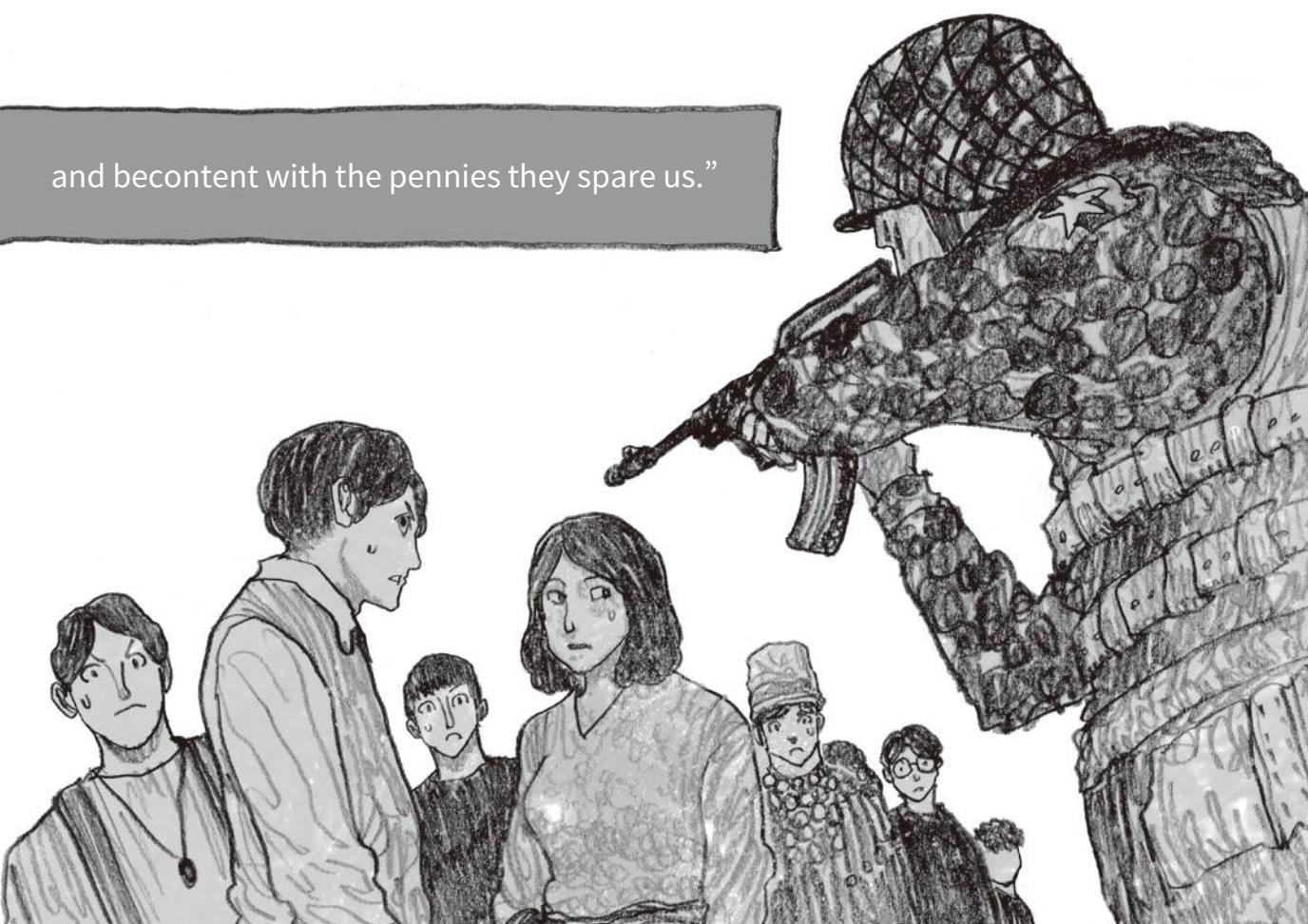


DELETE POST



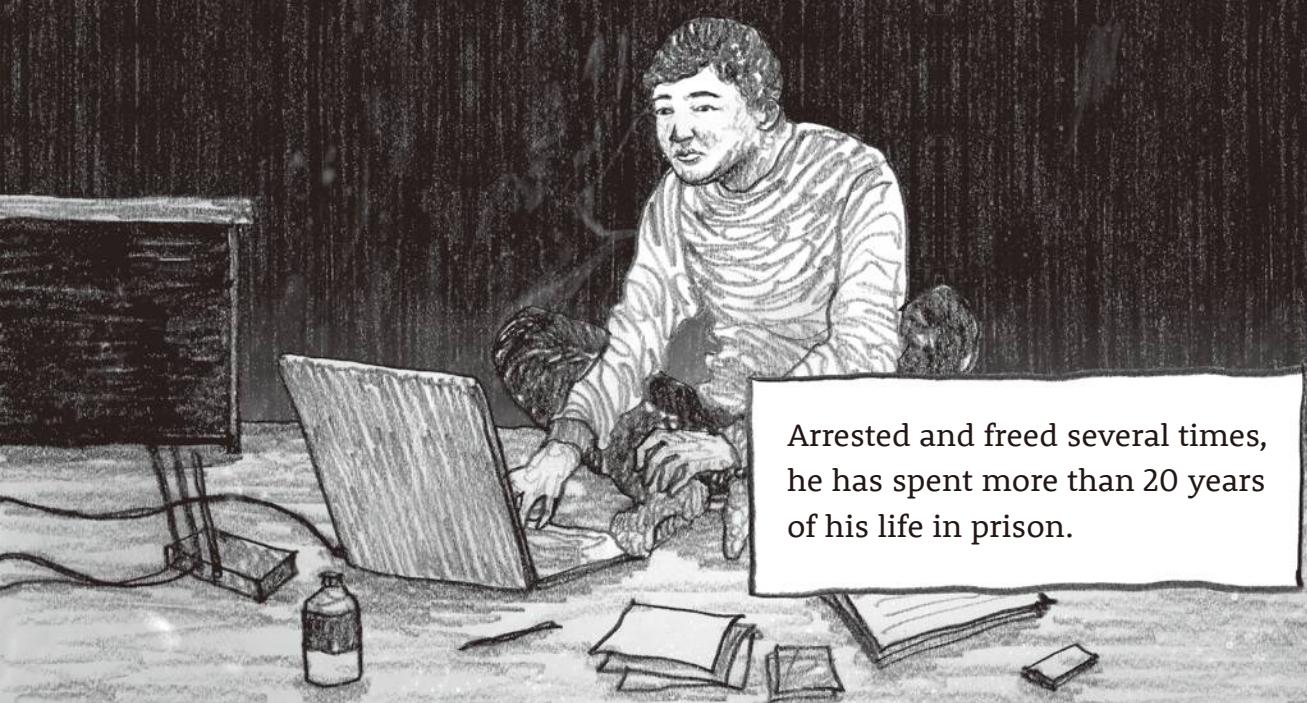
“We can no longer be slaves of military dictators,

and be content with the pennies they spare us.”



Hunted by the army, Min Ko Naing lives in hiding.

He is one of the best known figures of the pro-democracy movement. In 1988, he helped lead protests that lasted several months before a brutal and bloody repression. In 2007, along with other veterans of the 1988 uprising, he launched a new protest movement against the military dictatorship before being once again thrown in prison. The movement was taken up by monks opposing military rule, who led the “Saffron revolution” until it was eventually quashed.



Arrested and freed several times, he has spent more than 20 years of his life in prison.

But now he's back. And it feels as if history is repeating.



But this time his strategy is different. It's no longer about organising marches. Now, he and other activists are calling on government employees to strike and on everyone to boycott products sold by military-owned companies.

Healthcare workers were the first to respond to calls for civil disobedience.

We want our patients to know that we are not striking because we don't want to treat people,

We are striking against the coup d'état to help our patients, because we don't want a repeat of the old nightmare under military rule when we lost patients because there wasn't enough medicine or medical equipment.

Increasing numbers of government employees are trying to block the military from ruling.

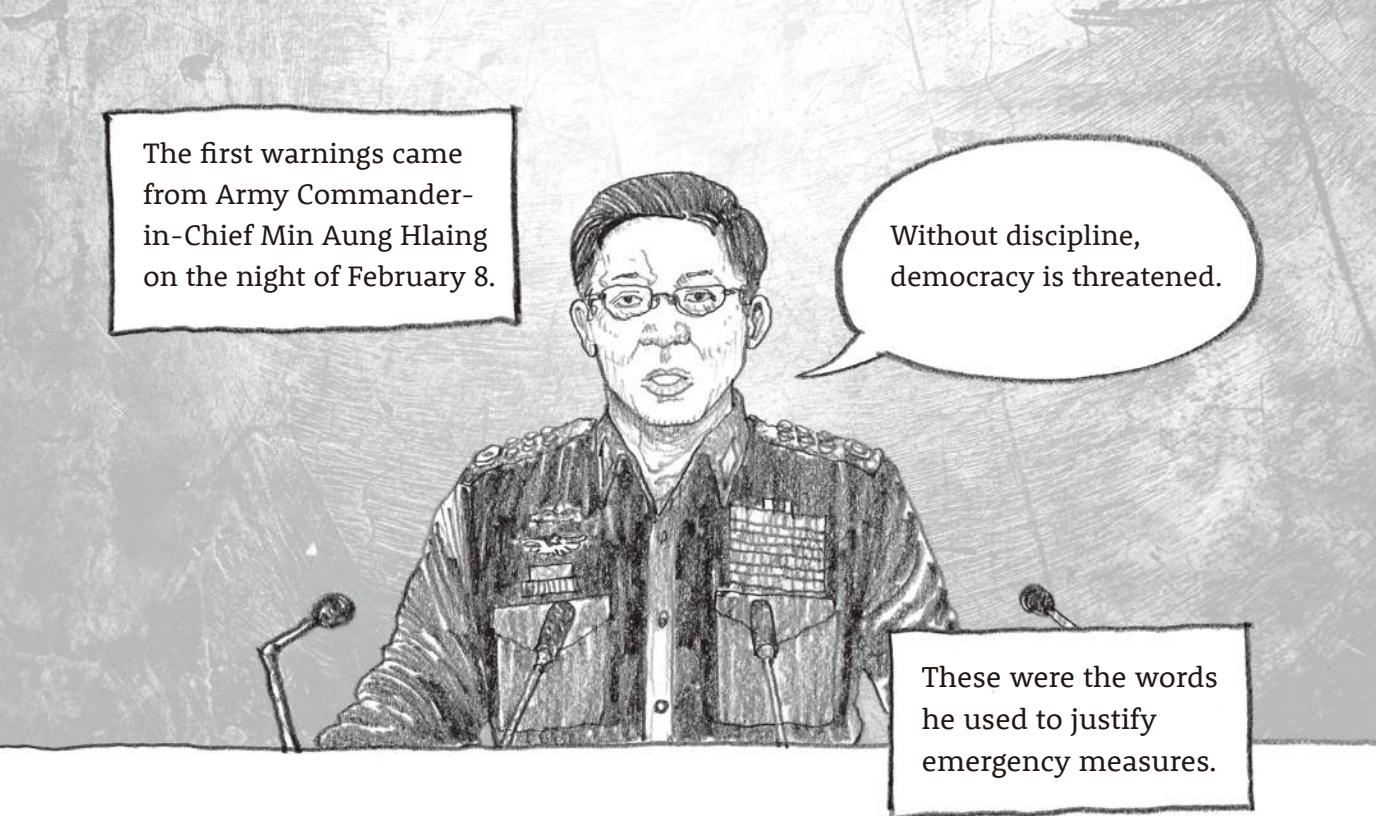
At the same time, in different parts of the country, more and more people are taking to the streets.

I'd rather be dead than having to live through military rule again.

We will overcome this.

Now that there's social media, the military can't do whatever they want. We are constantly connected to the rest of the world now. In 1988, they did whatever they liked. Now, it's a different era.

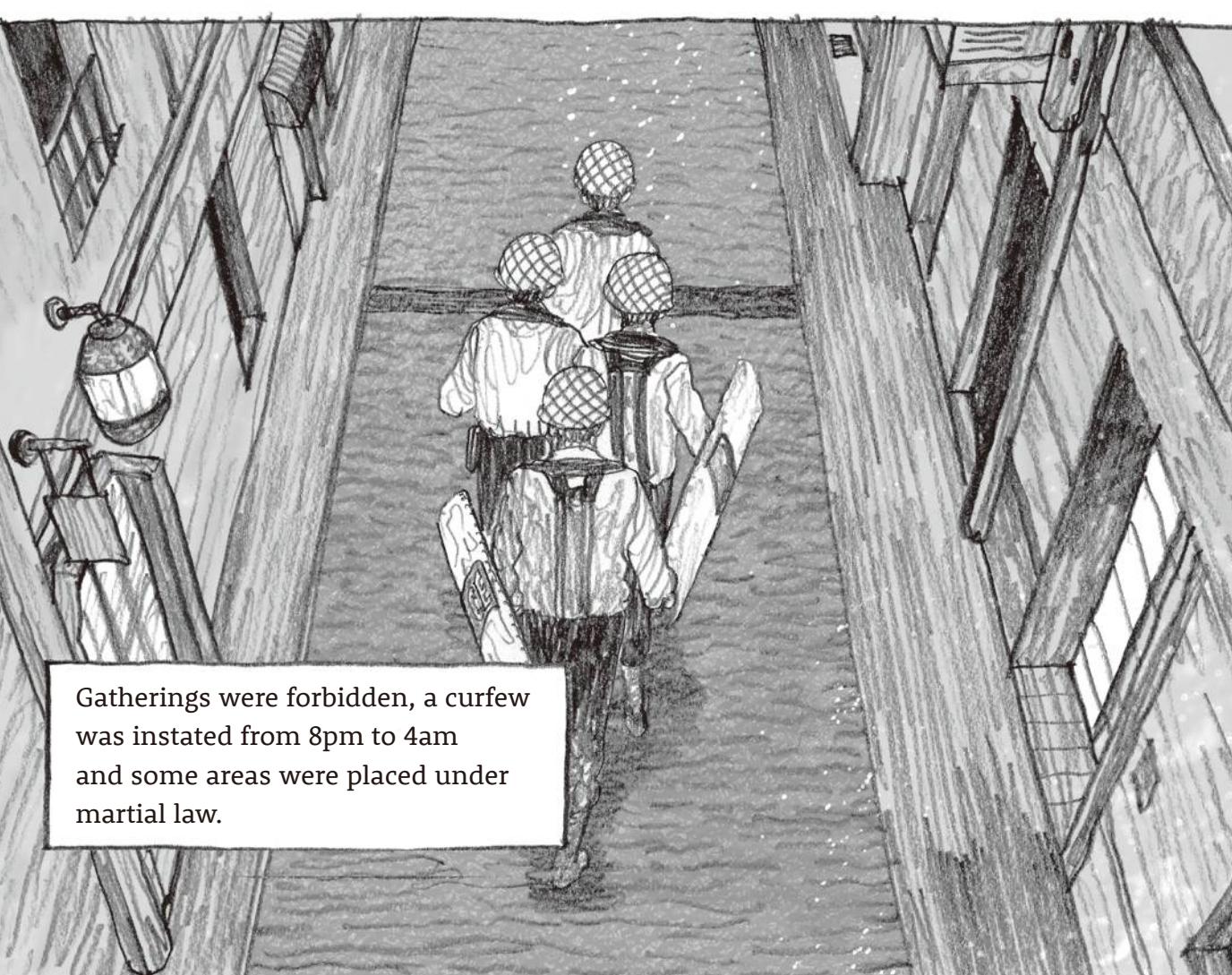
A shop keeper in Yangon who lived through the 1988 uprising and repression.



The first warnings came from Army Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing on the night of February 8.

Without discipline, democracy is threatened.

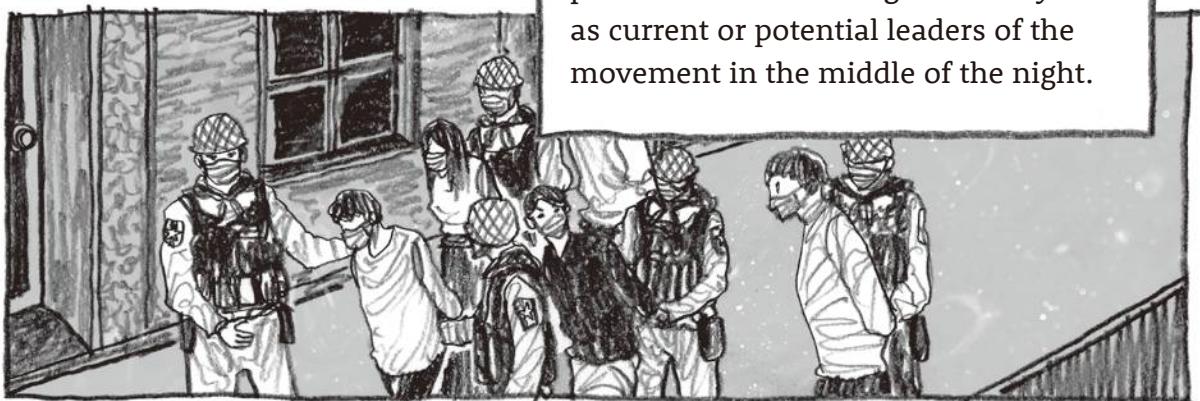
These were the words he used to justify emergency measures.



Gatherings were forbidden, a curfew was instated from 8pm to 4am and some areas were placed under martial law.



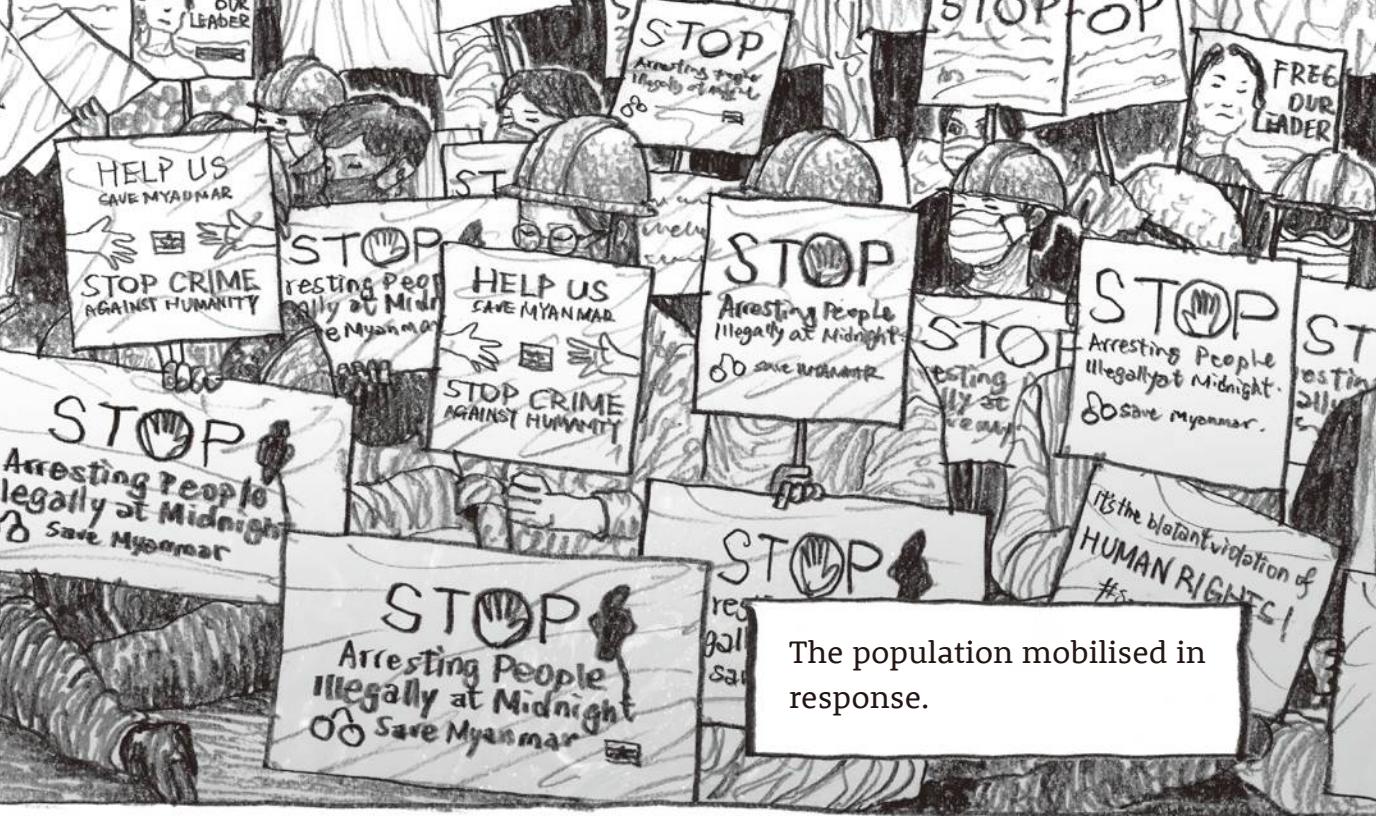
On February 9, Mya Thwe Thwe Khine, a grocery store worker from the capital, Naypyidaw, was shot in the head while protesting. By her 20th birthday she had been pronounced braindead.



At that time, her death was an exception. Initially, the military tried to cover their tracks: sending civilians to beat protesters and arresting those they saw as current or potential leaders of the movement in the middle of the night.

The members of the electoral commission that organised the 2020 elections were particularly targeted. They knew that the vote of November 8 was not fraudulent, contrary to Min Aung Hlaing's claims justifying the military coup. A coup that enabled him to retain his hold over the country's assets and continue to amass great personal wealth.



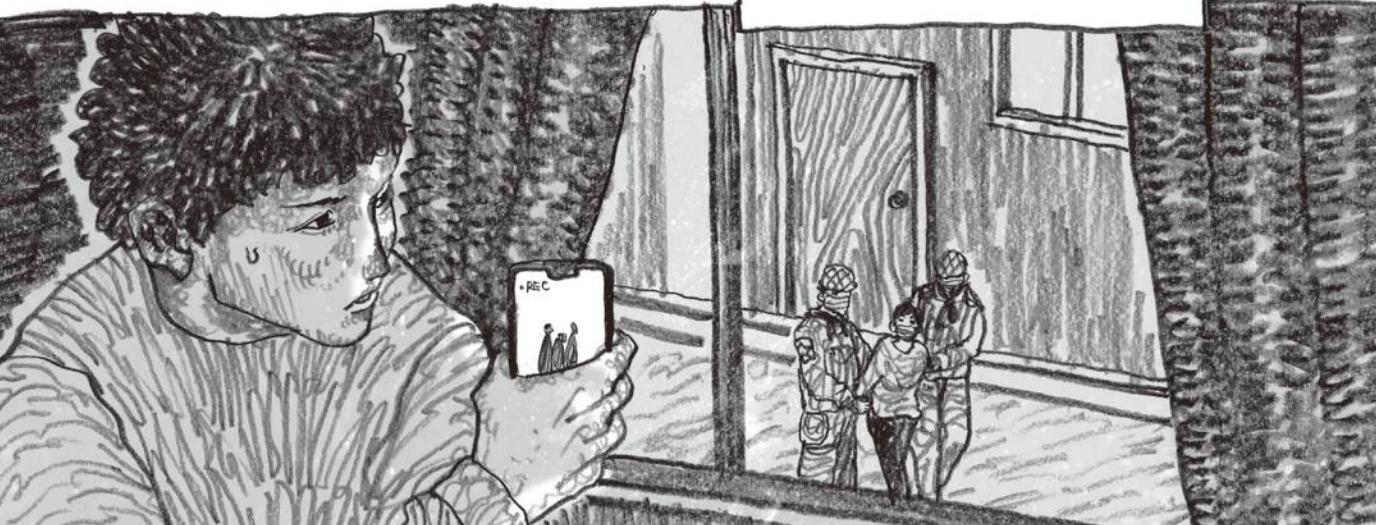


In various places, people formed citizen patrol groups to keep an eye on their neighbourhoods at night,

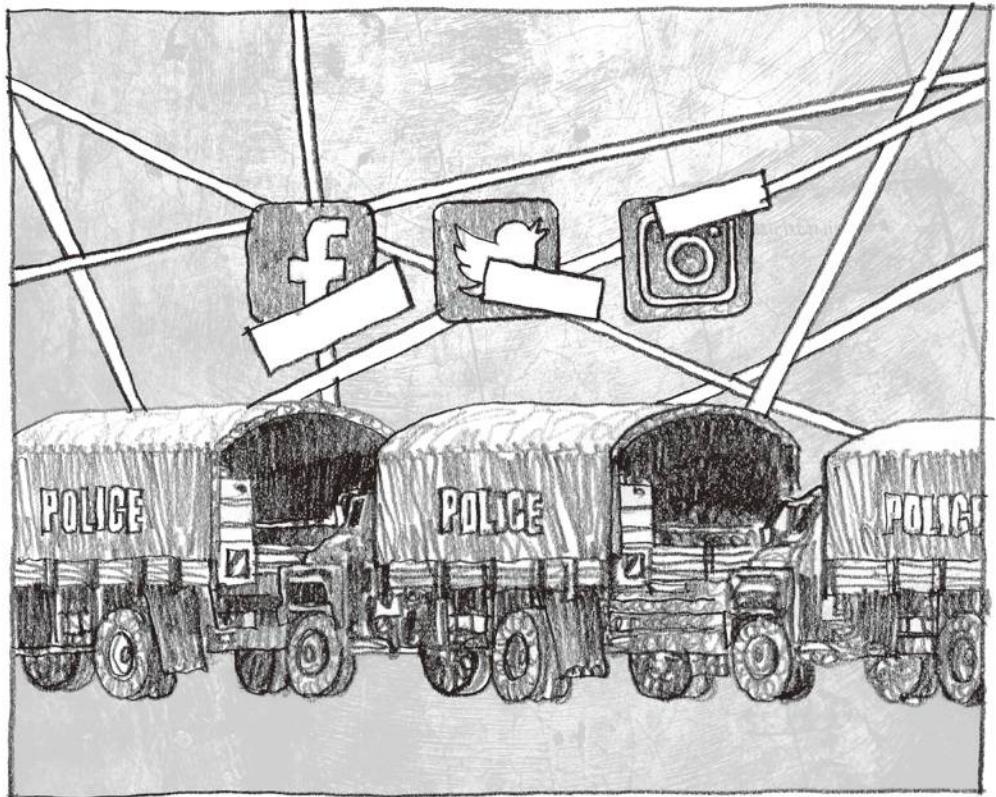
**KIDNAPPING
AT NIGHT**



and expose nighttime arrests.



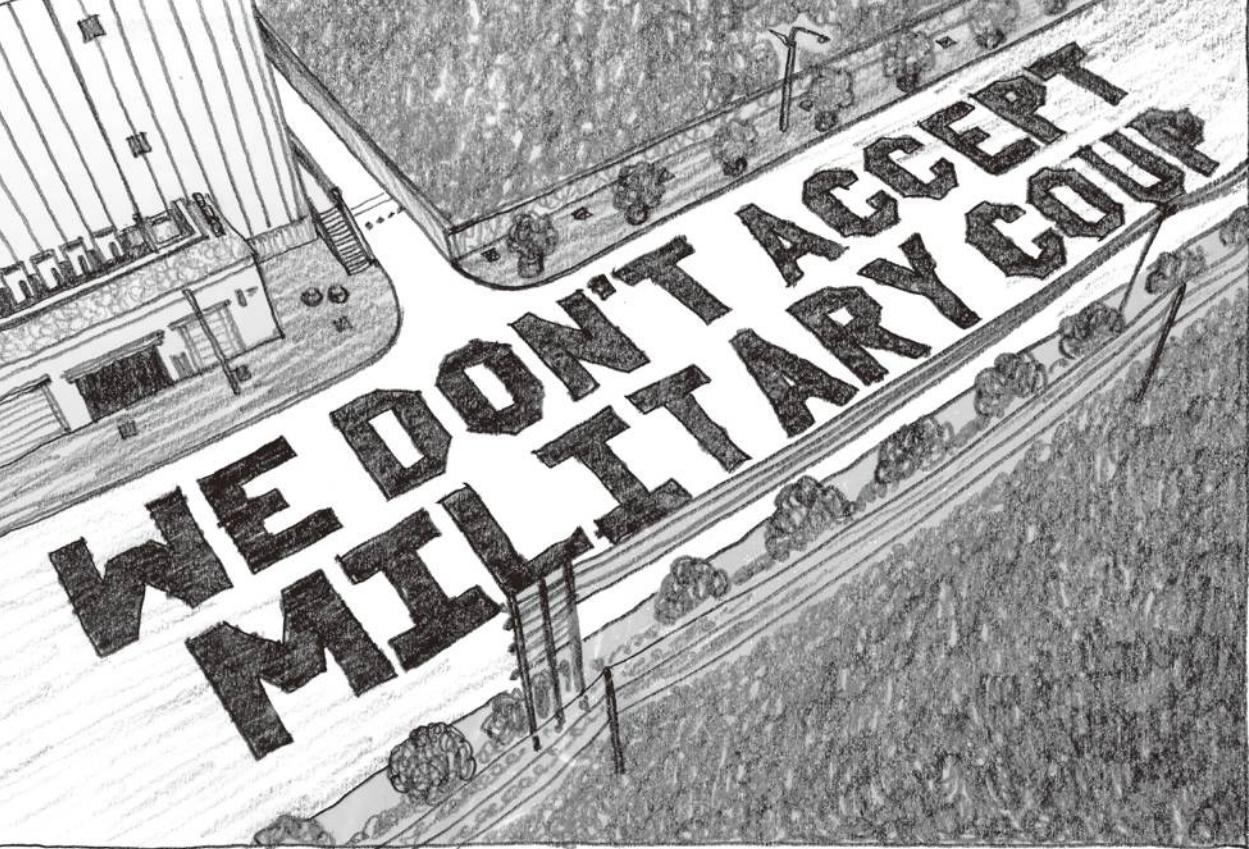
The regime is trying to control internet access and limit protesters' ability to organise and communicate with the outside world.

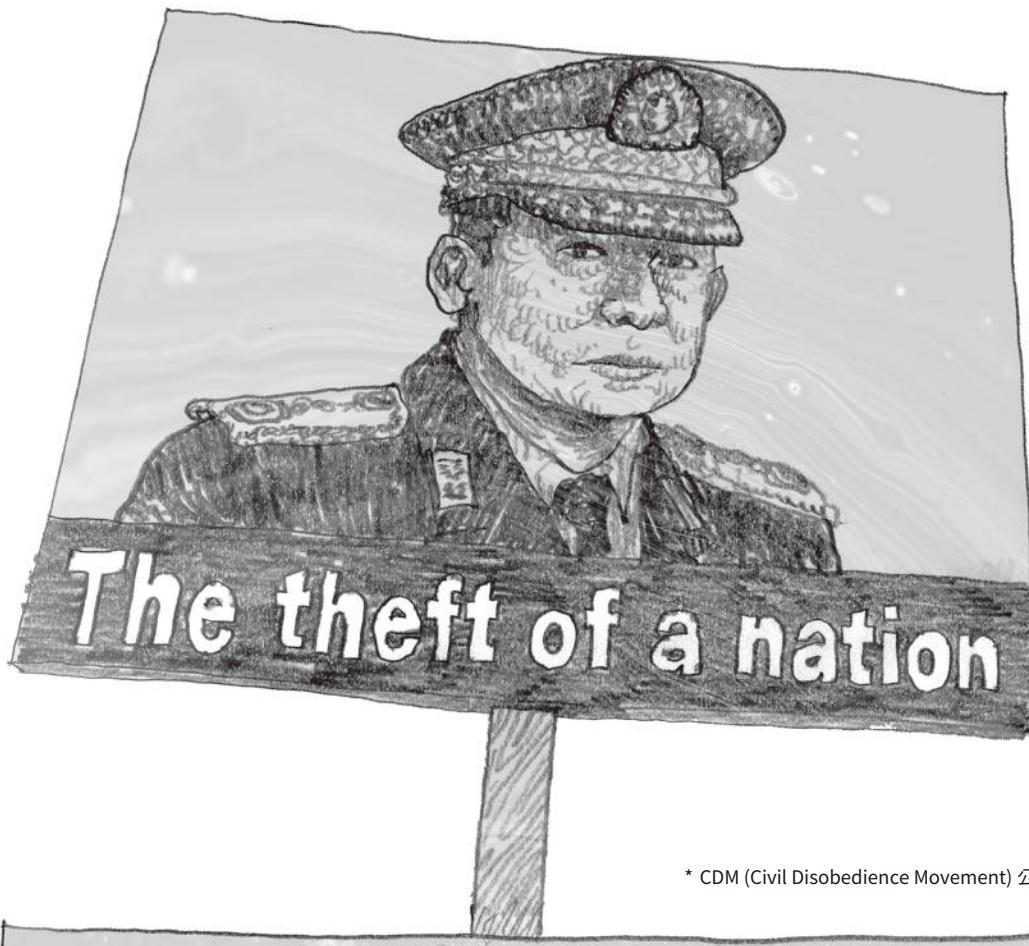


They disguise military vehicles as police vehicles – as if it wasn't obvious that the military is in charge.

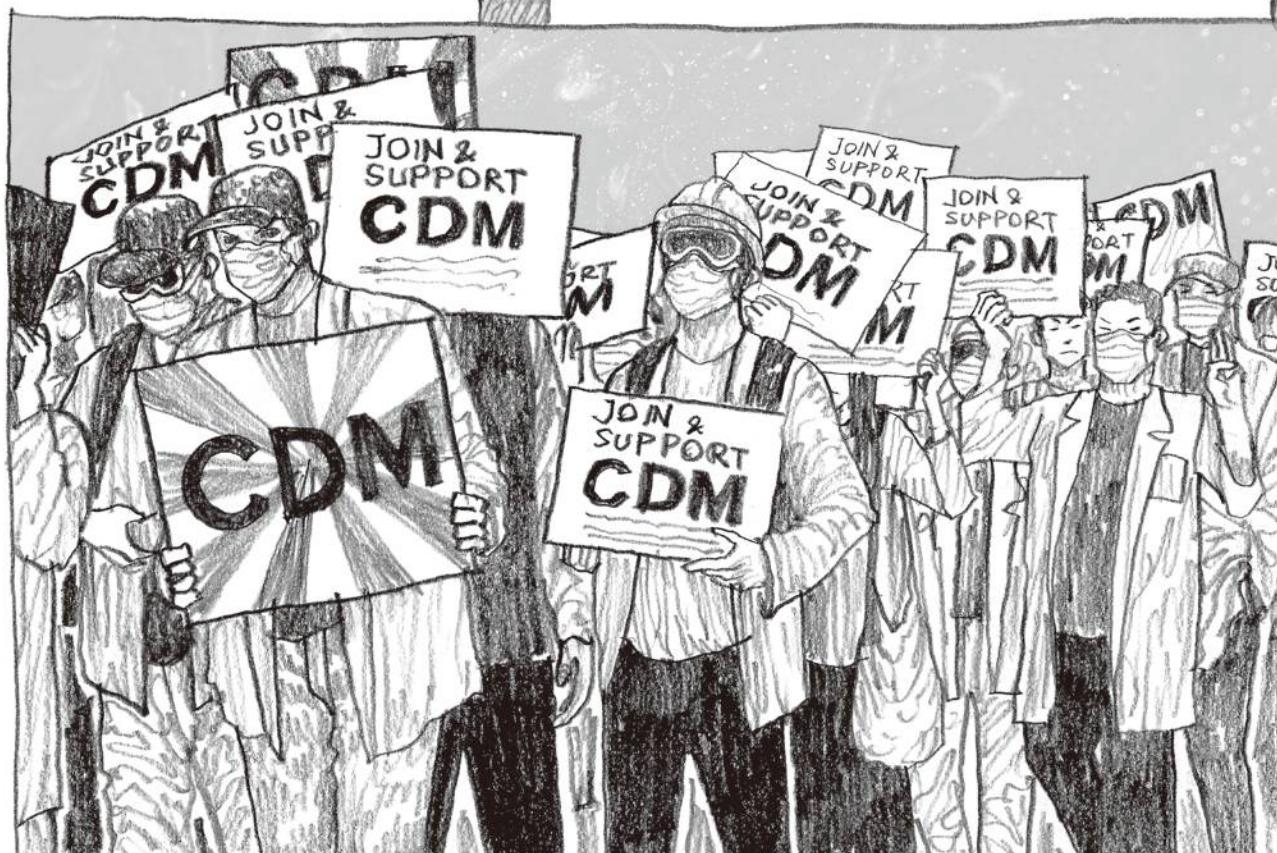


In spite of the risks, protesters are getting their message out to the world.





* CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement) 公民不服從運動



SUPPORT CRM



THEY SHOOT IN DAY
THEY STEAL AT NIGHT

LET THERE BE LIGHT
LET THERE BE DEMOCRACY

THEY SHI
THEY STE





**SAVE MYANMAR
SAVE DEMOCRACY**



MYANMAR
FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

An activist from 1988 describes a certain tendency in Burmese political culture.

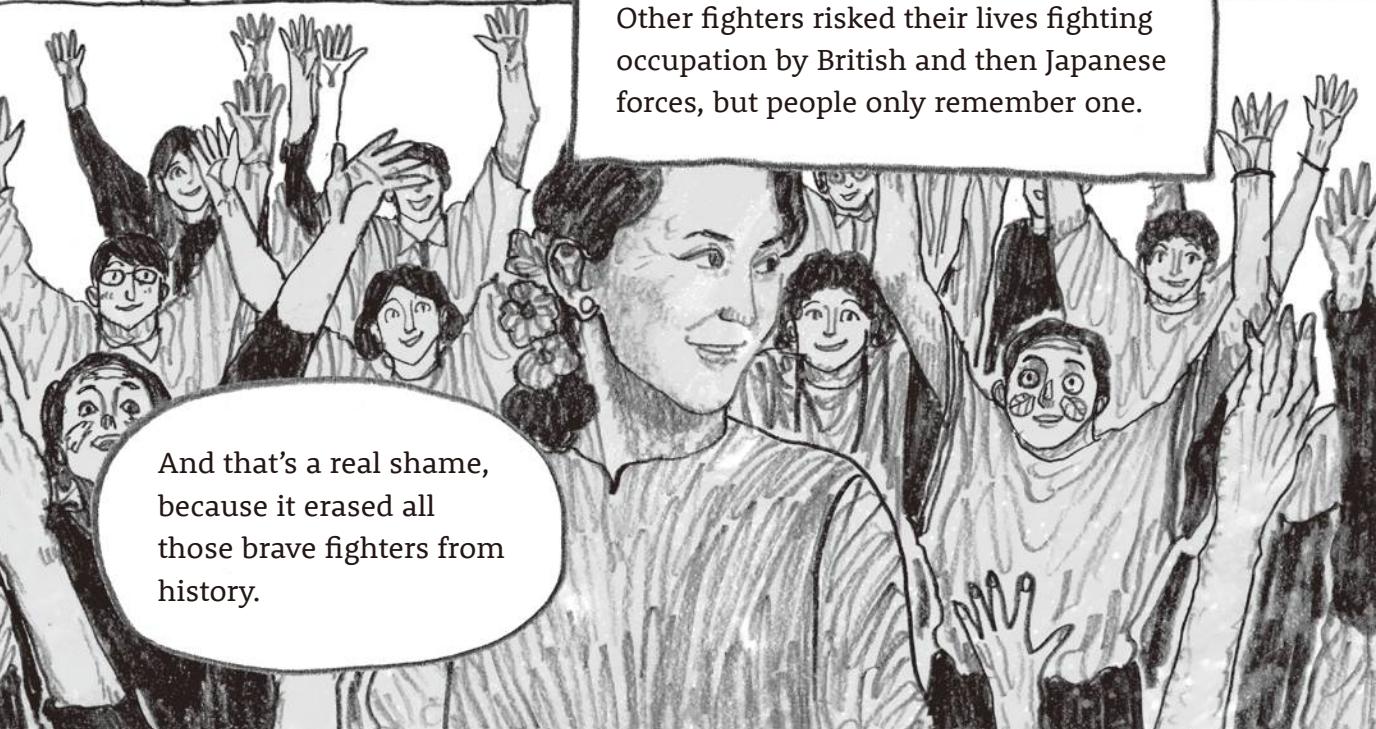
People are always looking for a hero, someone to look up to.



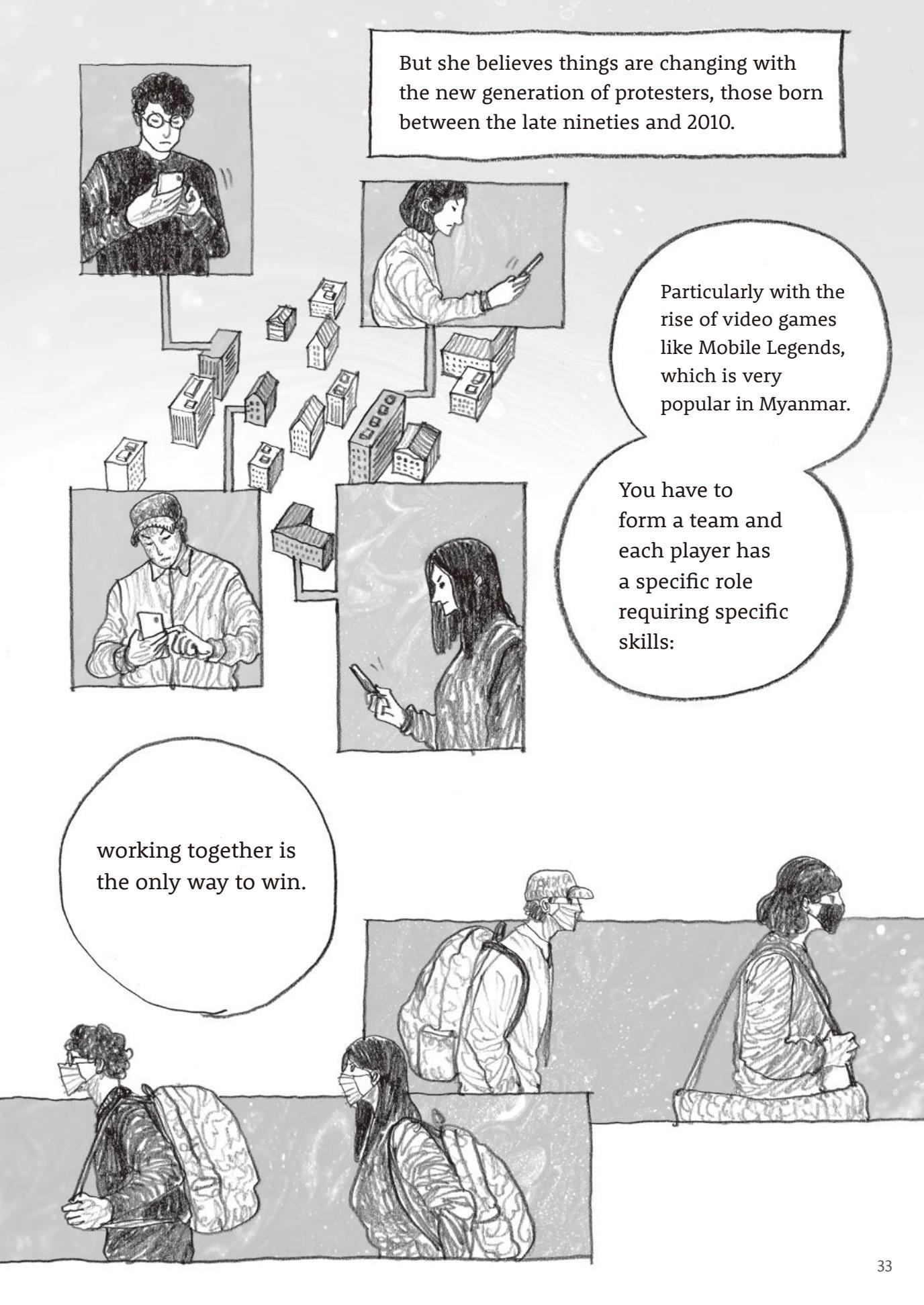
For many Burmese, Aung San Suu Kyi is like an aunt, or even a mother. Criticising her is unthinkable.



Before her, there was her father, Aung San: a hero of the battle for independence. Other fighters risked their lives fighting occupation by British and then Japanese forces, but people only remember one.



And that's a real shame, because it erased all those brave fighters from history.

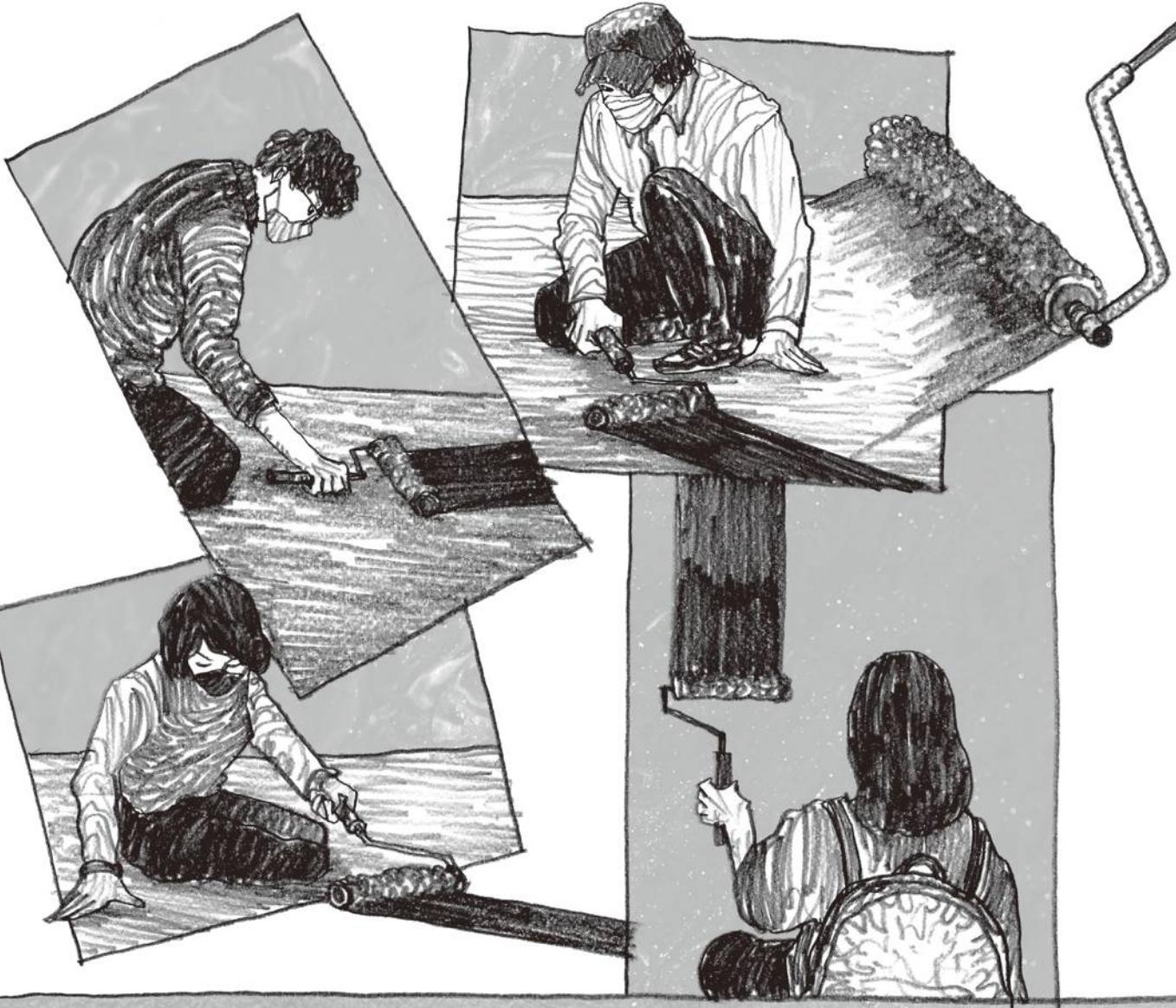


But she believes things are changing with the new generation of protesters, those born between the late nineties and 2010.

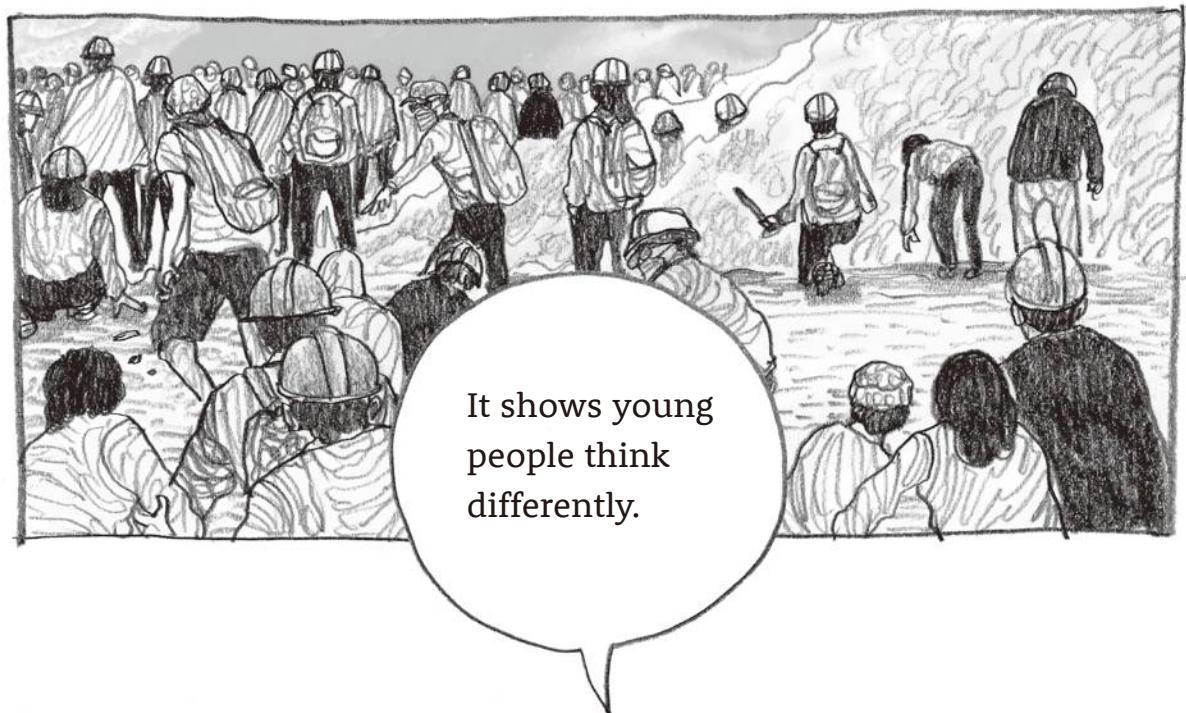
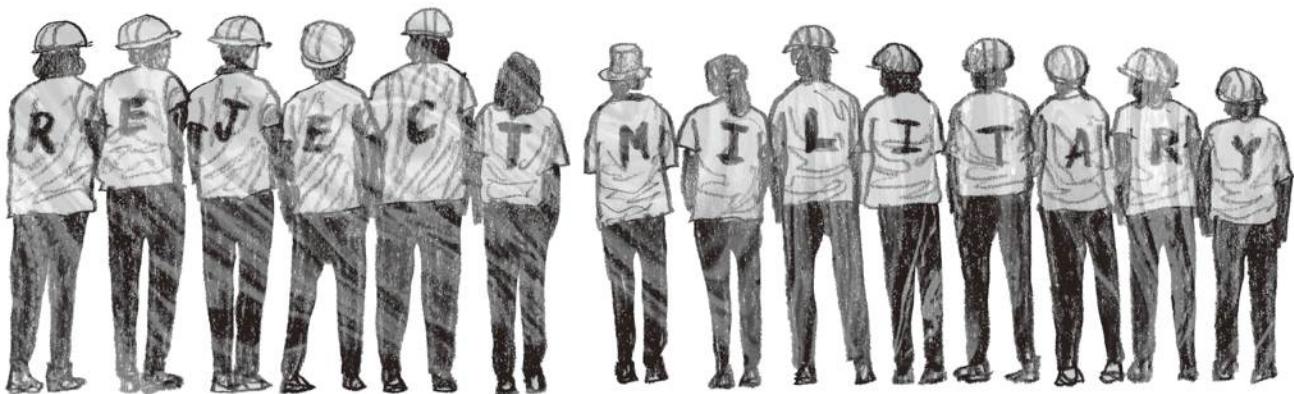
Particularly with the rise of video games like Mobile Legends, which is very popular in Myanmar.

You have to form a team and each player has a specific role requiring specific skills:

working together is the only way to win.

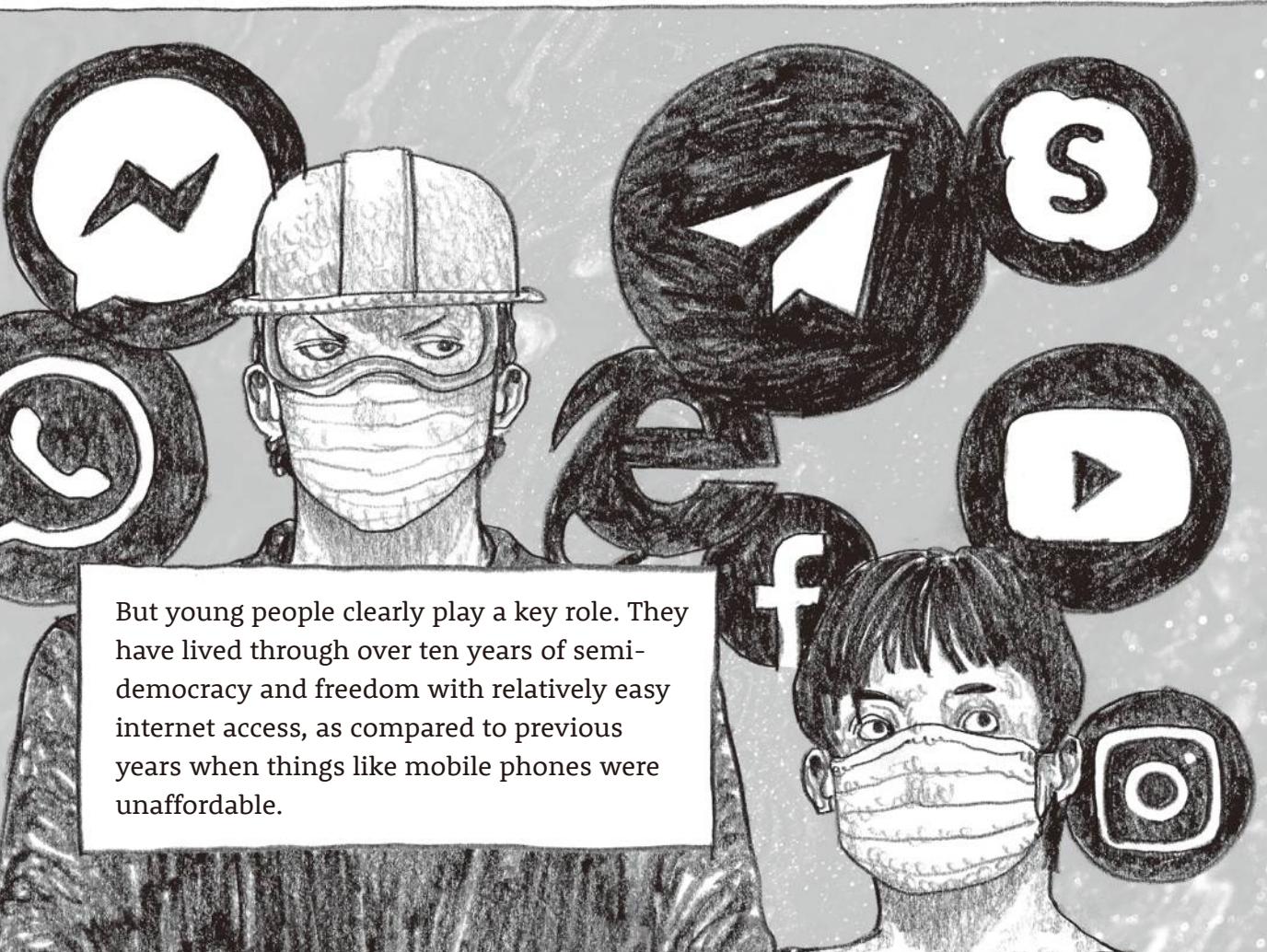


WE WANT DEMOCRACY
SAVE MYANMAR





The resistance against the military coup is not just a youth movement: it has united all generations.

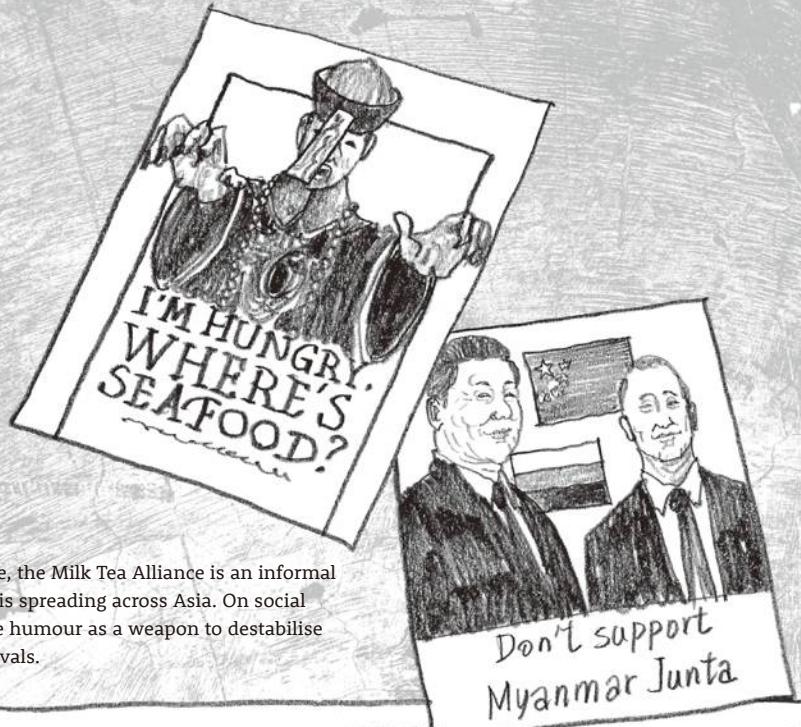


But young people clearly play a key role. They have lived through over ten years of semi-democracy and freedom with relatively easy internet access, as compared to previous years when things like mobile phones were unaffordable.

Many of them are looking to pro-democracy movements in Ukraine, Thailand and Hong Kong for inspiration.

Some young Burmese people even see themselves as part of the Milk Tea Alliance: an anti-authoritarian movement formed by young people from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Thailand, in opposition to the Chinese government and the Thai military regime.





Operating chiefly online, the Milk Tea Alliance is an informal activist network which is spreading across Asia. On social media, its members use humour as a weapon to destabilise their anti-democratic rivals.



But they also share their experiences and advice. Myanmar is now a full part of this alliance.